

WYCOMBE Wanderers produced some of the football that made them Rothmans Isthmian League champions last season, on Tuesday night when they powered into a 2-0 half-time lead at Hayes. And although they slackened in the second half, their early football was undoubtedly their best of the term so far.

A rare error late in the game allowed Hayes to pull back to 1-2 and put a completely different reflection on the game. In fact, Wanderers were in complete command for 70 minutes of the match and had they taken all their chances the final scoreline could easily have been five or six.

Not that things looked easy in the first ten minutes. Hayes came at Wycombe determined to carve out an early advantage and had the Blues defence distinctly rattled. After that, however, Wanderers proceeded to give their opponents a lesson in the finer arts of attacking football.

They did it without the services of leading goalscorer Tony Horseman, who injured a leg last Thursday and aggravated the injury at Dagenham on Saturday. The man who took his place was Dylan Evans.

Dylan had an unhappy season on the field last term but his great improvement in the friendly matches was plain to see. He came into the side on Tuesday and played his best game for the club.

MEAD MOVES

One other positional change was made — Keith Mead moving to fullback and Alan Phillips switching into the middle of the defence. At first glance this seemed a crime. Mead has been playing some of his best football for the Blues this season in the number 4 or 5 shirt. However, he made the most of his game at right back and seemed more adaptable to the position than Phillips. The latter, of course, also seemed happier to be back at centre half!

Apart from the opening 10 minutes, the whole defence looked sound with Gary Hand having a particularly fine game at left back. His speed and cultured left foot set up many raids. Dave Bullock, a former Hayes player, kept a firm grip on Roy Butler, a big but surprisingly agile centre forward.

There was a marked improvement in midfield where all three players worked much harder than usual. Howard Kennedy won the ball regularly while Graham Mackenzie linked well.

By STUART EARP Hayes 1, Wycombe Wanderers 2

As ever, Mick Holifield put in his 100 per cent.

But with Horseman absent, the big question was how the front three would perform. It was soon answered. The pick of them was Steve Perrin, who could easily have helped himself to a hat-trick with a shade more luck. As it was he scored one goal and also struck the crossbar.

It was pleasing to see Keith Searle beginning to recapture his excellent form of last year. He gave home centre half John O'Sullivan a real drubbing, beating him time and again in the air.

Had Hayes broken through early on, the whole outcome might have been completely different. They came out against Wycombe with their first victory behind them against Sutton last Saturday and immediately raced into top gear.

They created their first chance after only four minutes when a Mackenzie pass went astray and Peter Twigg blazed the ball over the crossbar. Hayes' speedy chasing and harassing looked as if it could well pay off. Wycombe tried to

get themselves out of trouble by passing back to 'keeper John Maskell and twice he had to race out and grab the ball off the feet of a Hayes forward.

Hayes' well organised defence dealt capably with anything Wycombe could offer while the midfield trio sprayed the ball around accurately. Then, in the 13th minute, Steve Perrin changed the whole game with Wycombe's first goal.

Wycombe were awarded a free kick just inside their own half and Bullock sent the ball deep into the penalty area. Searle leapt high to nod the ball on to Perrin who rode one tackle and managed to slip the ball around 'keeper Cracknell. He was left with a gaping net and simply slotted the ball home. Cracknell, who trained with Wanderers in the close season, should have made more of his chance but Perrin deserves full credit for creating his opening.

The goal worked wonders for the Blues. Suddenly everything began to click, passes found the mark, the running off the ball threatened constantly and for the first time this season they looked to be playing their best football. Perrin, receiving the ball from

Evans' flick, crossed dangerously into the area in the 17th minute for Searle to send in a first time shot and then Evans drove just over the top as Hayes began to crumble under the pressure.

Perrin all but made it 2-0 in the 32nd minute. From a corner on the left, Kennedy flighted over a perfect cross to the goal line, where Perrin was standing at the near post. With Cracknell nowhere, Steve flashed in a header from just three yards but saw the ball cannon off the crossbar.

Hayes hit back with 35 minutes gone — their first serious attack for about 20 minutes. Tommy James broke clear on the flank and crossed for Butler to send in a powerful header just over the top. It was one of the few times Wycombe's back four allowed the home forwards any degree of space.

But with Wanderers winning more and more of the ball in midfield — partly through their own efforts and partly due to Hayes' inaccurate passing — the pressure on the home net continued. Perrin and Evans both went close and just after Hayes player-manager Alan Harris had

replaced himself with Chris Batchelor, Wanderers made it 2-0.

PERRIN DANGER

Once again the danger came from Perrin on the right. He worked his way clear of the defence and then crossed low and hard across the box. With Hayes' defence at sixes and sevens, Evans coolly drifted in and placed the ball into the net.

The danger from a refreshed Hayes side was obvious at the start of the second half and Maskell had to race out and grab the ball of Twigg's toes in only the second minute. The home side, however, could not reproduce their first half assault and it was Wycombe who did the pressing. Holifield should have made it three when he lifted the ball over the top after Cracknell had fumbled Searle's close range effort.

Kennedy also went close with two long range efforts and then in the 58th minute Cracknell had to dive to save Holifield's firm drive. Sixty seconds later Perrin netted after local referee Daryl Reeves had blown for a debatable foul by Searle.

With 80 minutes gone, Hayes pulled back to 2-1 Wycombe dallied too long in clearing the ball with several players wasting the opportunity to clear. They paid the price when Kennedy attempted to pass back to his goalkeeper. The ball fell short and Twigg raced in, rounded the helpless Maskell and slotted home.

One error had brought Hayes back into a game in which they were outplayed for the major part. It would have been a travesty if they had scored again but had Wanderers converted more of their chances they would not have had to endure one or two anxious moments in the last ten minutes.

Sensibly, Wycombe did not bring back everyone to defence and could have had a couple of goals in the last five minutes. Cracknell saved from Mackenzie at full stretch and Perrin also went close.

Maskell came out well to punch clear from Twigg in the last minute and although the final whistle must have been welcome for Wanderers, they must also have left Church Road well pleased with their performance.

HAYES: C. Cracknell; S. Palfrey, A. Harris (sub: C. Batchelor, 42 mins.), J. O'Sullivan, M. Barnard; J. O'Callaghan, T. James, J. Sanders; R. Ross, R. Butler, P. Twigg.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell, K. Mead, A. Phillips, D. Bullock, G. Hand; G. Mackenzie, H. Kennedy, M. Holifield; D. Evans, K. Searle, S. Perrin. Sub: P. Birdseye (not used).

Referee: D. Reeves (Denham).

Half-time: 0-2. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Perrin (13), Evans (44).

Horseman to miss tie?

AFTER their giant-killing exploits last season, Wycombe Wanderers begin this year's F.A. Cup campaign tomorrow (Saturday) when they take on local rivals Marlow in the first qualifying round. Last term Wycombe reached the second round, beating Newport County in the process.

Wanderers are likely to be without their leading goalscorer Tony Horseman. "Bodger" injured his leg in training last Thursday and aggravated the injury at Dagenham last Saturday. He missed the Blues fine 2-1 Rothmans Isthmian League victory at Hayes on Tuesday night.

Dylan Evans came in for Horseman and played some of his best football for the club since he joined a year ago. He certainly looked an excellent stand-in for Horseman and scored the second goal.

Another player unlikely to return tomorrow is Terry Reardon. Wycombe will not want to risk the midfield player and it could be that he will return to the side at Leatherhead on Tuesday. Graham Mackenzie has been deputising well

recently, although he still needs more strength and weight to become a top class player in Wycombe's standard of football. Paul Birdseye will not play, as he is on holiday.

Marlow won the right to meet Wycombe after a three match marathon with Aylesbury United. The first preliminary tie ended in a 3-3 draw at Marlow. During the game two players (one from each side) received their marching orders. The replay was at Aylesbury and this time the teams played out a 1-1 draw in almost impossible conditions. The tie was finally decided on Monday when Marlow won 1-0 on their own ground.

Marlow, whose entry into the Rothmans Isthmian League was refused last year, have named a squad of 12 including three ex-Wanderers. Peter Eyres and Peter Sewell both had spells at Loakes Park, while Dave Wigley also spent a short time there.

ROTHMANS ISTHMIAN LEAGUE Division 1 (Up to 11/9/74)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
L'head	8	6	2	0	24	7	20
Enfield	8	6	1	1	11	4	19
Ilford	7	5	2	0	15	6	17
Wycombe	7	5	1	1	11	6	16
Dagenham	6	5	0	1	14	2	15
Tooting	7	5	0	2	10	7	15
Clapton	8	5	0	3	11	12	15
Sutton	7	4	1	2	11	7	13
Dulwich	8	4	1	3	13	11	13
Bishops	8	4	1	3	13	11	13
Woking	8	2	3	3	12	11	9
Walfstow	7	2	2	3	7	8	8
Hitchin	8	2	1	5	14	17	7
Walton	7	2	1	4	8	20	7
Barking	7	2	0	5	8	9	6
Hayes	8	1	3	4	7	10	6
Oxford	6	2	0	4	6	13	6
Leystone	7	2	0	5	5	12	6
K'stonian	8	2	0	6	4	14	6
Hendon	7	1	2	4	6	11	5
Slough	7	1	1	5	3	9	4
Bromley	6	1	0	5	4	11	3

ATHENIAN LEAGUE Division 1 (Up to 7/9/74)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wembley	6	4	2	0	15	3	10
Lewes	6	4	1	1	15	10	9
Cheshunt	5	3	2	0	14	7	8
Letchworth	5	3	1	1	12	7	7
Hounslow	6	3	1	2	14	9	7
Hornchurch	6	3	1	2	14	13	7
Redhill	5	2	2	1	7	4	6
Erith & B	5	2	2	1	8	4	6
Grays	5	2	2	1	10	10	6
Ware	5	2	1	2	11	13	5
Ruislip	5	2	1	2	8	11	5
Edmonton	5	2	0	3	11	11	4
Rainham	5	1	2	2	6	8	4
Alton	6	1	2	3	7	10	4
Marlow	4	1	1	2	2	5	3
Leiston	5	1	0	4	5	8	2
Worthing	6	1	0	5	4	19	2
Eastbourne	5	0	1	4	3	14	1